

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES—Wednesday, April 21, 1999

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
April 21, 1999.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN SHIMKUS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Reverend Bill Shimkus, Hope Lutheran Church, Idaho Falls, Idaho, offered the following prayer:

Most gracious heavenly Father, this morning we are shocked and saddened by the tragic killings that took place yesterday in Colorado. Our hearts go out to all of those who have lost loved ones in this terrible act of violence. Comfort the survivors in their time of sadness and loss. Grant healing to those hospitalized from wounds received in this attack and to those who will carry wounds inside them for years to come.

As we again witness the sad spectacle of senseless violence perpetrated on our school campuses, we ask Your guidance. Help us, we pray, find ways to safeguard the schools in which our children learn and grow, and to help dysfunctional families with troubled children prone to violence. In Jesus' name, Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from California (Mr. RADANOVICH) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. RADANOVICH led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate had passed a bill of the following title, in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 507. An act to provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, to authorize the Secretary of the Army to construct various projects for improvements to rivers and harbors of the United States, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that pursuant to Public Law 105-83, the Chair, on behalf of the Majority Leader, announces the appointment of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. DEWINE) to serve as a member of the National Council on the Arts.

CHILDREN ARE OUR FUTURE

(Mr. HASTERT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HASTERT. Mr. Speaker, yesterday our Nation witnessed a senseless tragedy in Littleton, Colorado. Before I begin my 1 minute, I would like the House to take a moment of silence to remember the lives of those poor students who died at Columbine High School.

Mr. Speaker, Americans across this Nation are trying to come to grips with the latest senseless tragedy that hit one of our schools. Why do some of our children feel the need to kill? How can they feel such hate? And why do they not have the moral framework that would stop this kind of tragedy?

There are no easy answers to these questions, but some things I do know, that we must do our best to make our schools safe. We must provide our children with the moral framework from which they can distinguish between right and wrong. We must stop the culture of death that makes vicious killers out of too many of our children.

Mr. Speaker, our children are our future. If we do not teach them the differences between right and wrong, our Nation's future is in peril.

My deepest condolences go out to the community of Littleton, Colorado and especially to the parents of the students of Columbine High School. As a parent of two boys, I can only imagine the grief that you are feeling today as you try to make sense of yesterday's tragedy.

WE NEED PRAYER IN OUR SCHOOLS

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, I want to associate myself with the remarks of our distinguished Speaker and his leadership.

We have another school tragedy now in Colorado. Experts are calling for more money, more police, more counselors, and certainly that would be a help. But I think there is something else fundamentally missing.

In America, when our schools can teach about Hitler and war but we cannot discuss God, something is very wrong, I say to my colleagues. Not to use this great tragedy as the catalyst for a proposition we should be considering, but I believe school prayer should be strongly considered by this body. People who pray together are not likely, through history, to kill one another. I believe it is a reasonable thing to pursue. It may not be the total answer, but it is a start in the right direction.

Let me remind Members that the Constitution may separate church and state, but it was never intended to separate God and the American people. We all pray for the families and grieve for the victims.

SENSELESS VIOLENCE IN COLORADO

(Mr. GIBBONS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, like my colleagues here, we all rise today to express our grief and sadness to the families of Littleton, Colorado, and once again the television sets across this country have flashed the words, "breaking news." This is another incident of violence that has occurred at one of our Nation's schools.

Yesterday, senseless and tragic shooting at Columbine High School is another painful reminder of the risk our children face every day as they attend school.

Last year in my district I held several townhall meetings to discuss the issue of school violence. The interest generated by these forums provided an important dialogue for community leaders across Nevada. They are doing an important job in helping to find the solutions to prevent these terrible incidents from occurring in our State.